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- **VALUE OF UNPAID ACTIVITIES BY OLDER AMERICANS TOPS \$160 BILLION PER YEAR**

Urban Institute. September 2005

Many older Americans continue to make valuable contributions to society long after they withdraw from the labor force. Older people often spend time caring for grandchildren and frail family members. Many volunteer their time to church groups, charitable organizations, and cultural institutions. Many also volunteer informally, helping friends and neighbors in need. Because older adults are not generally paid for their help, these services are often overlooked in the ongoing debate about Social Security, possible changes to the retirement age, and the proper role of older Americans in an aging society. This brief measures the value of unpaid activities by Americans age 55 and older in 2002. The study considers formal volunteer activities (defined as volunteering for an organization), informal volunteering (helping others who do not live in the same household), and caring for family members (parents and in-laws, spouses, and grandchildren). Estimates depend on both the number of hours spent in each activity and the value of each contributed hour. We measure older Americans' use of time, as in earlier briefs in this series (Johnson and Schaner 2005; Zedlewski and Schaner 2005), with data from the 2002 Health and Retirement Study (HRS), a large, nationally representative survey of older Americans. Because the value of each contributed hour is impossible to measure with certainty, we measure contributions under low-, moderate-, and high-cost assumptions. Our discussion, however, focuses on the moderate-cost scenario, which represents our best estimate of the value of unpaid activities. A methodological appendix provides details about our approach.

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311227_older_americans.pdf [pdf format, 6 pages]

- **CITIZEN'S GUIDE ON USING THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT AND THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974 TO REQUEST GOVERNMENT RECORDS**

Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives. September 2005

"This Guide is intended to serve as a general introduction to the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act. It offers neither a comprehensive explanation of the details of these acts nor an analysis of case law. The Guide will enable those who are unfamiliar with the laws to understand the process and to make a request. In addition, the complete text of each law is included in an appendix."

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/foia/citizen.html> [html format, 81 printed pages]

- BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN U.S. ELECTIONS: FINAL REPORT
Commission on Federal Election Reform. September 2005

"The 21-member private commission is organized by American University. Comprised of former Members of Congress, scholars and nonpartisan leaders, the group identified 'five pillars' of election reform voter registration, voter identification, voting technology, increased access to voting and nonpartisan election administration—and recommended ways to strengthen them."

http://www.american.edu/ia/cfer/report/full_report.pdf [pdf format, 113 pages]

- HIGHLIGHTS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE GRANTMAKING: A REPORT ON FOUNDATION TRENDS
Independent Sector and the Foundation Center. September 2005

The largest U.S. foundations provide 11 percent of their grant dollars to support structural changes aiding those least well off economically, socially, and politically. According to Social Justice Grantmaking: A Report on Foundation Trends—the first-ever study to benchmark foundation giving for social justice—support spans all areas of foundation activity, from promoting economic development in distressed areas, to ensuring access to health care for disadvantaged populations, to encouraging diversity in education. The report is being released jointly by Washington, DC-based INDEPENDENT SECTOR and the New York-based Foundation Center."

http://fdncenter.org/research/trends_analysis/pdf/socialjustice.pdf [pdf format, 4 pages]

- VOLUNTEERING IN THE UNITED STATES, 2005
Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor. December 2005

About 65.4 million people volunteered through or for an organization at least once between September 2004 and September 2005, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor has reported. The proportion of the population who volunteered was 28.8 percent, the same as in each of the prior 2 years. These data on volunteering were collected through a supplement to the September 2005 Current Population Survey (CPS). Volunteers are defined as persons who did unpaid work (except for expenses) through or for an organization.

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm> [html format, 5 printed pages]

- YOUTH ENGAGED IN SERVICE: A STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING DEMOCRACY
Innovations in Civic Participation. July 2005

ICP prepared this document for the US Department of State to illustrate how youth service programs are an underutilized, but effective vehicle for shifting transitional democracies toward healthy democratic functioning. This paper argues that by providing opportunities for young people to actively address community needs in a structured format, youth service is an effective way for young people to develop the tools necessary to properly shape and participate in civil society and government. This paper briefly examines youth service as a strategy for democracy building in the US and describes promising experiments in other countries around the world, including the West Bank, Pakistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa, Romania, and the Gambia.
<http://www.icicp.org/index.php?tg=articles&topics=231&new=0&newc=0> [pdf format, 8 pages]

- YOUNG VOTERS AND THE WEB OF POLITICS 2004: THE YOUTH POLITICAL WEB SPHERE COMES OF AGE
Lance Bennett, Michael Xenos
CIRCLE-The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement.
October 2005

This project involves a network-analysis of nonpartisan youth electoral engagement websites, plus some analysis of sites created by campaigns and parties. With regard to the nonpartisan sites, three trends stood out as the most promising. First, the size of the youth engagement web sphere has grown dramatically. In 2002, Bennett and Xenos were only able to identify 22 sites; repeating the same techniques in the 2004 cycle yielded a list of 35, as many new organizations and websites offered political commentary and information in a youth-targeted format. Second, in 2004 youth political websites showed marked increases in the amount of political information and issue discussion, as well as the use of interactive features unique to web communication. A few used features similar to those found on more popular dating and social networking websites to help connect younger citizens with those sharing common interests and preferences. Third, and most notable, this analysis of linking practices among youth political websites revealed a much more densely networked environment than Bennett and Xenos found in their prior investigations. Many youth-oriented political websites are making a concerted effort to include more, and more prominently placed links to other organizations working toward the common goal of greater civic and political involvement among American youth.

<http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP42BennettXenos.pdf> [pdf format, 17 pages]

- A LONG LOOK AHEAD: NGOS, NETWORKS, AND FUTURE SOCIAL EVOLUTION
David Ronfeldt
RAND Corporation. 2005

This paper speculates about the future of the environmental movement as a function of its increasing use of network forms of organization and related strategies and technologies attuned to the information age. The paper does so by nesting the movement's potential in a theoretical framework about social evolution. This framework holds that people have developed four major forms for organizing their societies: first tribes, then hierarchical institutions, then markets, and now networks. The emergence of a new, network-based realm augurs a major rebalancing in relations among government, market, and civil-society actors. In the near term (years), there will be continuing

episodes of social conflict as some environmental groups press their case, often by using netwar and swarming strategies. Over the long term (decades), new policymaking mechanisms will evolve for joint communication, coordination, and collaboration among government, business, and civil-society actors. Today, it is often said that “government” or “the market” is the solution. In time, it may well be said that “the network” is the solution.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2005/RAND_RP1169.pdf [pdf format, 11 pages]